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***Henry Ford Medical Group***

***Henry Ford Hospital  
& Health Network***  
Henry Ford Hospital  
Henry Ford Behavioral Health Services  
Maplegrove Center  
Kingswood Hospital  
Henry Ford Cottage Hospital  
Henry Ford Medical Centers

***Henry Ford Physician Network***

***Henry Ford Macomb Hospitals***  
Clinton Township Campus  
Mt. Clemens Campus  
Warren Campus  
Henry Ford Macomb Health Centers

***Henry Ford West Bloomfield Hospital***

***Henry Ford Wyandotte Hospital***  
Center for Health Services

***Health Alliance Plan***  
Alliance Health and Life  
HAP Preferred  
CuraNet

***Community Care Services***  
Henry Ford at Home  
Henry Ford Health Products  
Hospices of Henry Ford  
Henry Ford Extended Care  
Henry Ford Home Health Care  
Center for Senior Independence  
Greenfield Health Systems  
Henry Ford Continuing Care  
Henry Ford OptimEyes  
Henry Ford Pharmacy  
Occupational Health

***Centers of Excellence***  
Heart & Vascular Institute  
Josephine Ford Cancer Center  
Neuroscience Institute  
Transplant Institute  
Vattikuti Urology Institute

***henryford.com***

February 27, 2012

The Honorable James Marleau  
Chairman, Senate Health Policy Committee  
1010 Farhat Building  
Lansing, Michigan 48909

**RE: Autism Legislation**

Dear Chairman Marleau:

Senate Bill 414 and Senate Bill 415 require insurance coverage for the diagnosis and treatment of autism spectrum disorders. The Henry Ford Health System (HFHS) joins the Michigan Health and Hospital Association and the Michigan State Medical Society in support of requiring coverage of autism services.

Autism is a complex developmental disorder that occurs in approximately one out of 110 births. There are over 15,000 Michigan children with this condition, with another 1,000 added yearly. Autism is one of the few chronic conditions currently not covered by insurance in Michigan. Twenty-nine other states have this coverage, with autism legislation pending in 10 other states.

Early diagnosis and intensive intervention leads to positive academic, functional, and vocational outcomes, with as many as 47-50% autistic children who have access to treatment achieving normal function, and 40% showing improved function. Very few families have the financial resources to participate in these important therapies without insurance coverage. Passage of this legislation will allow Michigan to assure greater access to families seeking treatment and help retain and attract qualified therapists to Michigan. The Henry Ford Center for Autism and Developmental Disorders provides diagnosis and treatment for autism, but our center is limited in the number of patients we can serve, due to the scarce number of competent, certified therapists -- most leave our state after graduation to pursue jobs in states which do provide reimbursement for their services through insurance coverage. Children who reside in less populous areas of Michigan currently have no nearby centers, and we hope to develop programming and



make appropriate outreach efforts to begin serving these families as well.

Senate Bills 414 and 415 require insurance coverage for autism and establish important criteria for the diagnosis and evidence-based treatment of autism spectrum disorders, giving affected children and their families the opportunity for best results. We support the legislation and would urge adoption.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nancy M. Schlichting", with a large, elegant loop at the end.

Nancy M. Schlichting  
CEO Henry Ford Health System

cc: Honorable Members, Senate Health Policy Committee  
Honorable Rick Snyder, Governor  
Honorable Brian Calley, Lt. Governor  
David Meador